

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

S E C R E T STATE 119410

FOLLOWING REPEAT BANGKOK 09122 SENT SECSTATE INFO CHIANG MAI
DATED JUNE 5.

QUOTE

S E C R E T BANGKOK 9122

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, PINS, TH, BM, US

SUBJ: ALLEGED CIF ORDER TO ABANDON OPIUM CULTIVATION

1. IN LATE MAY VILLAGERS LIVING IN THE ANG KHANG AREA (NB0497)
TOLD PRINCE BHISADEJ OF THE ROYAL HILLTRIBLE PROGRAM THAT THEY HAD
RECEIVED LETTERS FROM GENERAL LI WEN HUAN, COMMANDER OF THE THIRD
CIF, TELLING THEM TO STOP OPIUM PRODUCTION, ACCORDING TO AN
AUSTRALIAN WORKING WITH THE TRIBAL RESEARCH CENTER IN CHIANG MAI.
THE VILLAGERS ASKED BHISADEJ TO ASK GENERAL LI ON THEIR BEHALF
THAT THEY BE ALLOWED TO GROW OPIUM FOR AT LEAST ONE MORE YEAR.
THE VILLAGERS COMPLAINED THAT THE SOLDIERS OF GENERAL LI HAD
UP-ROOTED OPIUM PLANTS IN THEIR VILLAGE. BHISADEJ DECLINED
TO MAKE THE APPROACH.

2. A VARIATION OF THIS ACCOUNT WAS GIVEN THE D/S COUNSELOR IN
FEBRUARY BY TWO FORMER CIF, ONE RESIDING IN BAN LUANG (ANG
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KHANG AREA) AND ONE IN BAN YANG, FANG DISTRICT, CHIANG MAI.

THESE FORMER CIF SAID THAT GENERAL LI HAD ISSUED A WRITTEN ORDER TO THIRD CIF TO STOP OPIUM CULTIVATION. ONE COMMENTED THAT THE ORDER WAS NOT MEANT TO BE OBSERVED THIS GROWING SEASON (OCTOBER 1973 TO FEBRUARY 1974) BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN ISSUED AFTER THE OPIUM HAD BEEN PLANTED. HE ADDED THAT THE ORDER WOULD BE ENFORCED IN BAN LUANG THE NEXT GROWING SEASON EVEN IF I "HAVE TO SHOOT SOME PEOPLE". HE SAID THAT LAHU TRIBESMEN, THE MAIN OPIUM GROWERS IN THE BANG LUANG AREA, WERE NOT AFFECTED BY THE ORDER, AND ADDED THAT THE "CONSERVATISM" AND LOW CULTURAL LEVEL OF THE LAHU MAKE THEIR SEPARATION FROM OPIUM CULTIVATION MORE DIFFICULT THAN WAS THE CASE WITH THE YUNNANESE.

3. AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI COMMENTED IN MARCH THAT THERE HAD BEEN INDICATIONS THAT GENERAL LI IS CONCERNED ABOUT ACCUSATIONS THAT HE IS NOT LIVING UP TO HIS AGREEMENT WITH THE RTG TO STOP OPIATE TRAFFICKING AND THAT HE MAY BE TAKING STEPS TO FURBISH HIS IMAGE AS A LAW-ABIDING RESIDENT OF THAILAND.

4. COMMENT: NO DATE WAS GIVEN FOR THE LETTER ALLEGEDLY SENT BY GENERAL LI TO THE VILLAGERS IN THE ANG KHANG AREA BUT WE ASSUME THAT THIS MUST HAVE BEEN DURING THE LAST GROWING SEASON. HOWEVER, NEITHER DICK MANN OF THE UNDPAC, WHO VISITS THE ANG KHANG AREA FREQUENTLY, NOR THE D/S COUNSELOR IN HIS OVERNIGHT VISIT TO THE AREA IN FEBRUARY HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THE UPROOTING OF OPIUM PLANTS BY GENERAL LI'S SOLDIERS. WHETHER OR NOT THESE REPORTS ARE ACCURATE IN DETAIL, WE DO CONSIDER THEM FURTHER INDICATION THAT GENERAL LI IS CONCERNED ABOUT IMPROVING HIS IMAGE IN THAILAND. MASTERS UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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